



Dear Family & Friends,

We hope this finds each of you well, and enjoying the season. We have enjoyed a blessed year full of new opportunities, challenges and joy.

Last year, we didn't get out Christmas cards and/or a year-in-review like this because on December 9th we had a new addition to our family! Beautiful Eliana Mariabelle (we call her Ellie for short) came into the world on that Friday, and it has been such an amazing journey to watch her grow up. She makes us light up *every single day*, and nowadays she's walking and cooing more and more. We made her the star of our Christmas card this year, and you can see that our little angel takes after each of us, except that she has the biggest smile of all!

We wanted Gaby to stay home and raise our little girl, but my position at Design Chemistry hadn't grown the way we'd hoped. So I began looking for another job, and ironically got a call the same hour that Gaby gave her official notice at the her job that she would not be returning. I am the Internet Marketing Manager for CK Franchising, the home office of **Comfort Keepers**. It's a much different job than what I was last doing, but I'm enjoying it and love helping the franchisees grow their businesses. I recently found out that I'll be going to the annual conference in Boca Raton, FL in April!

Gaby LOVES staying home and raising Ellie. She says that every morning is like Christmas, waking up to the best present ever. She fills the day playing with Ellie, singing and reading to her, and taking her to various events. Gaby has been enjoying story time (at the library) and swim classes, and will soon be taking sign language classes. Gaby enjoys "mommy networking", and she's been our ambassador of goodwill in the community as well! She's been painting again recently, and Ellie is already following in her Mami's footsteps!

In April, I returned to the Philippines with my father and a couple other men from my church on a short-term mission trip. It was the first time two of the men had ever been that far away, and my first trip back in 5 years (since we went together in 2007). There have been many changes since our last visit there, but the wonderful, strong spirit of the children persist, and he got to spend more time with our sponsor son Diony. I first met him during my first visit in '06, and we've sponsored him throughout our marriage. Diony graduated from college in October of this year! The mission trip was a wonderful opportunity to encourage those kids that there are a lot of people halfway around the world that care about them very much, and I was inspired and motivated in my faith as well from that journey. I created a website with the photos, videos and other memories from this most recent visit: <http://missions.sh aunandgaby.com/2012/philippines/>.

In September, we celebrated our 5-year wedding anniversary with a trip to the east coast. We took a long road trip to Maryland and Delaware. We stayed at a couple different hotels near the coast and we LOVED playing in the waves and showing Ellie the ocean for the first time. We visited the Dogfish Head brewery, the first city in the U.S.A. (Lewes, DE), some museums, and Assateague Island where we did see some wild horses from a distance. I really enjoyed the craft brews at Dogfish, and Gaby enjoyed the fresh seafood! Ellie really enjoyed her first experience playing in the ocean waves, and we will always cherish the memories of that first road trip with our little girl.

I competed in a triathlon over the summer, and ran every step of the 5-mile Turkey Trot on Thanksgiving for the first time in ages! Gaby and Ellie walked the Turkey Trot together, and we've enjoyed that being part of our Thanksgiving Day traditions. We've been running together again in recent months, all three of us (Ellie in the stroller), and we're talking about registering for some races together again in 2013.

We hope this letter finds you well, enjoying time with your families and the other blessings of the season. MERRY CHRISTMAS and Happy New Year!

Love,

Shaun & Gaby